

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2003-05**

AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING THE MAYOR'S PARKS COMMISSION; DIRECTING THE PARKS COMMISSION TO PROVIDE THE MAYOR WITH INDEPENDENT ADVICE REGARDING THE CREATION OF A PARKS DISTRICT; TO DRAFT LEGISLATION RELATED TO THE PARKS DISTRICT AS APPROPRIATE; TO PROVIDE ADVICE ON THE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING OPTIONS FOR A PARKS DISTRICT, IF APPROPRIATE; TO DEVELOP A "GREENPRINT" FOR THE CITY OF ATLANTA PRIORITIZING PARKS AND GREENSPACE ACQUISITIONS; TO ASSIST WITH THE EFFECTIVE PURCHASE OF PARKS AND GREENSPACE PROPERTIES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, in March 2002, the Mayor appointed a Task Force on Parks and Greenspace to provide advice on improving the operation and maintenance of City parks; increasing the number and total acreage City parks; and developing a vision for the future of Atlanta's parks system; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force on Parks and Greenspace submitted a comprehensive report to the Mayor in October 2002; and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta's parks are a powerful tool for defining civic identity, generating economic development, improving the environmental health of the community, including air and water quality, reducing health costs, and increasing tourism, business vitality, natural beauty, and civic pride, as well as an overall sense of well-being; and

WHEREAS, compared to cities of similar size, the City of Atlanta currently ranks among the lowest in the nation in park acres per 1,000 residents (at roughly one-third the national average); and

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta has no green space larger than one third of a square mile – substantially less than comparable cities; and

WHEREAS, the available supply of undeveloped land within the jurisdiction of the City is rapidly being depleted, making time of the essence; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Task Force on Parks and Greenspace recommended that the City of Atlanta must improve the maintenance and safety of existing parks, must dramatically increase the amount of its park space, and must provide special recreation parks and special events venues to reduce the stress on existing parks; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Task Force on Parks and Greenspace proposed that the City create the City of Atlanta Parks District, an independent agency, to run the City's park system; and

WHEREAS, the evaluation and creation of a Parks District will have a significant impact on numerous facets of City government, as well as a major impact on the future developmental vision of the City; and

WHEREAS, the involvement of leaders within the civic, business and parks community will significantly aid the City as it faces these many parks issues;

NOW, THEREFORE, BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME, AS MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, pursuant to the City of Atlanta Charter, 1996 Ga. Laws, p.4469 *et seq.*, Section 3-104 and Section 2-182(4) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Atlanta, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1: I hereby establish an independent panel to be known as the "City of Atlanta Parks Commission" (hereafter, the "Commission"), which will consist of between ten (10) and twenty (20) members of the community chosen for their expertise in parks and green space, community and economic development, general business acumen, strategic planning, finance, and organizational planning.

Section 2: Arthur M. Blank, the Chairman of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, shall serve as Chair of the Commission. Staff members of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, one of whom shall serve as Executive Secretary to the Commission, shall assist the work of the Commission.

Section 3: The Acting Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs and the President of the Atlanta Development Authority shall represent the City of Atlanta at all Commission meetings and in all aspects of the work of the Commission.

Section 4: The Commission shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

- (a) Further define the vision and mission for the City of Atlanta's parks and greenspace as previously expressed by the Task Force on Parks and Greenspace in its Report to the Mayor and by the City's Parks Department in various documents and initiatives through the years.
- (b) Refine the concept of an independent Parks District to manage the City's parks.
- (c) Develop proposed legislation to create the Parks District, including governance and fiscal authority.
- (d) Assist the City in obtaining passage of the proposed Parks District legislation in the Georgia General Assembly.
- (e) Develop the organization and management structure for the proposed Parks District.

- (f) Develop a "greenprint" and master long-range plan for parks acquisition and development, which shall include a prioritization of acquisition opportunities and recommendation on maximizing the impact of the use of existing parks acquisition funds.
- (g) Develop an appropriate short-term acquisition strategy for parks and greenspace.
- (h) Assist City personnel with the parks acquisition process as appropriate in order to increase the efficiency of the process.
- (i) Develop grassroots and corporate support for the proposed Parks District, greenprint and master plan, and acquisition strategy.
- (j) Develop an appropriate communications strategy for the work of the Commission.

Section 5: The Parks Commission shall be composed of members chosen by the Chairman in consultation with the Mayor's Office.

Section 6: The Commission shall meet periodically, as determined by the Chair, and findings shall be communicated to the Mayor, as the Commission deems appropriate. The Commission shall prepare periodic reports detailing its undertakings for distribution to the Mayor and members of City Council.

Section 7: This Administrative Order shall remain effective until rescinded by the Mayor.

SO ORDERED, this 24 day of November, 2003.


SHIRLEY FRANKLIN, MAYOR

ATTEST: 

DEPUTY MUNICIPAL CLERK

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